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Affirmation

AN INDEPENDENT VOICE FOR:
UNITED METHODISTS FOR LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL, TRANSGENDER, AND QUEER CONCERNS
PO BOX 1021, EVANSTON, IL 60204-1021 * UMAFFIRMATION_AT_YAHOO.COM *
WWW.UMAFFIRM.ORG

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Come to Our Birthday Party! We're 35 Years Old!

Join us in San Francisco to celebrate Affirmation's 35th Anniversary Friday, Sept. 24 to Sunday, Sept. 26. After 35 years we are still here in the church. We are still Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer, and we are still very much God's beloved. It's time to celebrate and look back at who we have been and what we have accomplished, as well as a time to look ahead at the journey we still have and the work to be accomplished.

Affirmation will be hosting the gathering on the last weekend of September in San Francisco. We will begin Friday evening with a time of meeting and reacquainting with one another. Over the weekend we will move through recalling our past to looking ahead at what we need to do. *You are invited* to join us whether you are an Affirmation member or not. All are welcome. As part of the weekend, there will also be an official Affirmation Membership meeting, open to everyone, however to be a

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Fun Things to Do in San Francisco

By Stephen Mallett.,
Council Co-Coordinator

Please join us in September for our Birthday Bash / Membership Meeting. We will have lots of fun remembering old times and looking forward to transforming our church. In addition to all the great times we will have together, our meeting will be located in the heart of San Francisco, one of the most fun cities anywhere.

Our event will take place at the Americana Hotel, just blocks between Market and Folsom Streets. It is an easy walk to the grand Civic Center Plaza and UN Plaza, and a short trolley ride down Market St to the Castro, or up to Embarcadero Plaza and the Ferry Building Marketplace offering shopping and restaurants on San Francisco Bay. A quick trolley ride on the F line from the Embarcadero will take you to Pier 39

and Ghiardelli Square. On Sunday afternoon, Sept. 26 several blocks of Folsom Street will be closed to pedestrian traffic, and the Folsom Street Fair will be in full swing to entertain and delight. Consider staying a day or two extra to see all the sights. Spend part of a Sunday just walking around nearby Chinatown and save room for a lunch or dinner at "The Stinking

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BY:

Thank You, Diane & Jan DeLap

**By Tim Tennant-Jayne,
Affirmation Co-Spokesperson**

As Affirmation Spokesperson during our 35th Anniversary celebration year, I am well aware of the awesome history of which I am a part. Some pretty amazing folk have guided our organization and movement over the years.

One of these amazing individuals is Diane DeLap, who recently resigned as our Co-Spokesperson. Diane served on the council for her allotted full term until retiring from that role last year.

For many years she served Affirmation's membership as our sole Spokesperson and later as Co-Spokesperson. In this role, Diane was the first openly transgender person in a leadership position of any United Methodist related or affiliated organization.

As our spokesperson during the 2008 General Conference, Diane was a voice and face of queer diversity within our denomination. She played a pivotal role in helping the General Conference delegates keep any transgender prohibitions out of the *Book of Discipline*.

Diane brought to the Affirmation Council an important awareness of our transgender members and their concerns, combined with wonderful, loving hugs.

Little more than a year ago, Diane's spouse Jan agreed to join the Council, adding her unique voice to our decision making. In the all too short time of her

service, she was a valued part of the Affirmation Council.

Unfortunately, Jan was diagnosed with breast cancer this spring. To focus their energies on overcoming this disease, both Jan and Diane have chosen to resign from their council responsibilities.

We will miss their wisdom, their insights, their humor, and their beloved Barry [Manilow]. We will miss you both in our gatherings.

Yet we rejoice in your continued presence in Affirmation's membership and in The United Methodist Church. We know you will continue to find ways to help heal United Methodism of its queerphobia.

Please keep these wondrous women in your thoughts and prayers.

New Exciting Brochures Available!

The Affirmation brochure has been updated post GC 2008. If you'd like to help spread the word about Affirmation, let us know. We'll print and mail you a few. Keep in mind printing time. (The brochures take a fair amount of time to print.) Send an email to umaffirmation_at_yahoo.com (Subject: "Brochures") or drop us a line at:

Affirmation
PO Box 1021
Evanston IL 60204-1021

Affirmation Newsletter

This Affirmation newsletter is a quarterly publication.

Only Affirmation's elected spokespersons may represent the official positions of this organization. Opinions here, signed or unsigned, are those of the writers, and do not necessarily represent the opinions of Affirmation.

Articles for consideration for publication may be submitted to: AffirmationNewsletter_at_yahoogroups.com *

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Co-Editors: Gary Shephard and Judy WestLee

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E-mail: umaffirmation_at_yahoo.com *

Mission Statement

As an independent voice of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer people, Affirmation radically reclaims the compassionate and transforming gospel of Jesus Christ by relentlessly pursuing full inclusion in the Church as we journey with the Spirit in creating God's beloved community.

Adopted January 2005

* **Note:** substitute the symbol "@" for the letters "_at_" in the email addresses.



Treasurer Reports Good News

By Jan Olson, Affirmation Treasurer

I have this strong urge to go out and spend \$6.00 of Affirmation's money! This may sound like a strange urge and an even stranger amount to spend, but I do have my reason.

Affirmation's fiscal year 2009-2010 ended on April 30, 2010. I have just finished closing out the books and found that our income was \$6.00 more than our expenses. Now as a treasurer I should be more than pleased to see that we brought in more money than we spent. That's a great accomplishment for a not-for-profit organization, especially in the current economic climate.

But with the amount being \$6.00 it would really tickle my funny bone to have spent the \$6.00 and have our income match our expenses to the penny. It must have something to do with my intense drive for balance and symmetry. If the amount had been larger, say \$600 or \$6000, I would have just given thanks and had no urge to spend the surplus.

Great thanks needs to be given to the members of the Affirmation Council (recent past and present) for the contributions they have made. In the last fiscal year close to \$3000 has been spent by these folks that they have chosen to give as in-kind donations rather than to be reimbursed. And these are the expenses that I have been told about. I am sure there are many other expenses that I will never see. Without these in-kind donations my report could not have been so positive.

This is also a good time to mention the time given by a dedicated group of people who help to keep Affirmation alive and seeking a truly inclusive United Methodist Church. There is no monetary value that can be assigned to this donation because it is priceless. We, as an organization, would not exist without them and others like them. Next time you see those involved in the everyday running of the organization (perhaps at the anniversary celebration in September) remember to thank them.

And while you're at it ask them what you can do to help. How about becoming a council member? How about offering to do a specific task even though you can't commit to the time to be on the council? How about including Affirmation and the council members in your prayers? How about saving up some vacation time to be with us in Tampa in 2012 for General Conference?

How about being a presence for Affirmation in your local area by handing out brochures, wearing an Affirmation shirt or button or talking about the work we are doing and our hopes and dreams for our church?

And of course I would be remiss as a treasurer without: How about writing an additional donation as a special thanks for their dedication?

It Takes A Village...

No one person ever runs an organization, and such is true of Affirmation. We have a rather decentralized structure, and as such, it's important to have someone to empty our post office box periodically and forward the contents.

We were shocked to learn the end of April that Doris Rudy, in charge of said post office box, had died unexpectedly from complications following surgery.

Doris was an amazing woman. She was delivered by a female doctor, and lived on a farm that didn't have electricity until she was 13.

She was active in a variety of organizations, and graduated from high school as Valedictorian in 1952. She graduated college in 1956. She taught for a few years before earning a Master of Arts in Theatre in 1961. She married John Rudy in 1962 and they moved to Evanston, IL.

In 1979 she graduated from Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary with a Master of Divinity degree. She believed that her ministry could be effective without her being ordained, and remained a lay person.

She worked at the seminary for 20 years. She retired, and entered the world of real estate.

She was a dedicated volunteer with The UMC at the local, conference, jurisdictional and national levels.

She will be greatly missed by all whose lives she touched.

Council Met & Prepares for Future

By Stephen Mallett, Council Co-Coordinator

The Affirmation Council met in Minneapolis in April and had a very productive two and a half days. In addition to Council members, our treasurer, Jan Olson met with us.

We were saddened to not have Diane and Jan DeLap with us at the meeting. Jan has recently been diagnosed with a serious health problem, and they both recently resigned from the Council to devote their energies to her health and healing. We greatly missed their energy and contributions to our work.

We discussed plans for our next meeting and 35th Birthday Bash in San Francisco in September. See the accompanying article in this issue, and please register to join us for the celebration in September.

Jan Olson updated us on Affirmation's financial situation. We are doing all right, but hope to raise more funds so that we can have a large presence at General Conference 2012.

Stephen shared stories of how the rainbow WWJD bracelets from Convo have sparked conversations with various persons, and we agreed to look into purchasing bracelets for Affirmation events with the slogan, "Compatible By Grace".

We discussed ideas for our Christmas Cards, and will work with the artist around the theme of "Everyone Counts".

We hope to add several persons to the Council over the next few months and will hope to add a Co-Spokesperson in the vacancy left by Diane DeLap.

Judy WestLee, co-editor of our newsletter, met with us on Saturday morning and helped with discussions of issues related to its publication and distribution.

Preparations for General Conference 2012 were central to our meeting, and each Council member volunteered to pursue one or more action items related to website up to date, and having a presence on Facebook and Twitter. Bylaw updates were discussed and will be presented to the membership in September at our Birthday Bash - membership meeting.

Many thanks to Walter Lockhart and his family for hosting the Council for a cookout at his home on Saturday evening. We very much enjoyed worshiping Sunday Morning at Walter's Church.

Update Your Contact Info!

It's important for you to notify us when you move. Relying on the US Postal Service's address correction service can be iffy at best.

It also helps if we have an up-to-date email address in case your snail mail starts coming back. Email us at affirmation_at_yahoo.com (Subject: "Address Change") or mail us at: Affirmation, PO Box 1021, Evanston IL 60204-1021.

What's This Unmarked Mail?

Affirmation has always been forced to be discreet. The United Methodist Church's prohibitions and restrictions around GLBTQ persons have forced Affirmation to send our mailings with just a return address and no outside markings.

Sometimes these mailings come from our Evanston, IL post office box. In recent years a congregation in Massachusetts has sent our newsletters with their bulk mail permit. Now the newsletters are being produced elsewhere and you're likely to receive mail from a church in Edina, MN.

Please continue to open the unmarked mail so that we can be in contact with you. Also consider registering your email address with us so that we can send mail electronically. It's greener and it will make Affirmation much more efficient. Your Affirmation Council is working to use all available technologies to efficiently organize and build our coalition.

Registration Form Affirmation Birthday Celebration Sept. 24-26, 2010

Name(s) _____

Address _____

Email (to confirm & link to hotel registration) _____

Phone (in lieu of email) _____

Special Diet Requests _____

Enclose Check Payable to Affirmation for \$125 before Aug.1 or \$150 after Aug. 1 per person

Mail to: Stephen Mallet, 2515 Oakland Ave., Nashville, TN 37212

Birthday Party Planned...

(Continued from page 1)

voting part of the membership meeting, you must be a current, dues-paid member.

Schedule:

Friday, Sept. 24

Arrival and Registration beginning at 3 PM

Gathering together 7 – 9 PM including

Remembering our History and Visioning our Future

Saturday, Sept. 25

Worship beginning at 10 AM

Anniversary Celebration

Annual Meeting

Birthday Brunch (included in your registration) 11:30 – 1:30

Afternoon Workshops 2 – 5 PM including

- Diversity
- Queering Sex and Sexuality
- Organizing in the Digital Age

Dinner on Your Own

Evening Plenary Session 8 – 10 PM

Sunday, Sept. 26

Worship (including a bit of ecclesiological disobedience) 10AM

Closing and check out by 12 noon

Folsom Street Fair – or – other sights and activities or head home early 12 PM

Cost: \$125 per person for registration postmarked by Aug. 1

\$150 per person after Aug. 1

Accommodations: Our meetings will be held at the Hotel Americana Best Western downtown at 121 7th St. You are responsible for making your own hotel reservations. We have secured a block of rooms at the Americana at a discounted rate of \$144 per night (plus taxes), per room for up to 4 persons. Once we receive your registration, you will be sent a link to allow you to register at the hotel at this discounted price. Our block of rooms will only be held until Aug. 15, so be sure to register soon. Complete the registration form included in this newsletter and mail it along with your check. You can snail mail or email us for forms if you need more or if your newsletter is missing the registration form.

E-mail: umaffirmation_at_yahoo.com (subject line: Registration) or

Snail mail:

Stephen Mallett

Film Review: *Fish Out of Water*

By Stephen Mallett, Council Co-Coordinator

A new film that explores the relationship between the Bible and homosexuality is now available.

Produced and directed by Ky Dickens, this film is a critically acclaimed documentary exploring the seven Bible passages most frequently used to condemn homosexuality and justify discrimination. The film blends animation with interviews with respected scholars, leading theologians and members of the LGBTQI [Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex] community.

Ms. Dickens uses autobiographical references to her own coming out, and the frequent negative responses of her fellow undergraduate sorority sisters, to provide a framework for what began as a personal exploration of how she could understand and affirm who she is as both a Christian and a Lesbian. The resulting film is both quite accessible and non-threatening. Copies may be purchased at the Web site: www.fishoutofwaterfilm.com.

Ky Dickens presented the film to a packed house recently at Vanderbilt University, her alma mater. Both the film and discussion following were extremely well received. Ms. Dickens is bright, entertaining and well spoken. You can contact her through the film website and make arrangements for her to facilitate a showing in your community.

West Ohio Annual Conference Elects a Qualified Person

By a narrow margin of 28 votes, the West Ohio Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church recognized that an individual's skills and talents matter more in the service of God's People, than does their sexual orientation or gender identification. The nomination of Bill Brownson for the position of chief financial officer had been a contentious subject for several months. Brownson is a gay

man in a long-term committed relationship. When asked how he could remain so calm during the sometimes heated debate, Brownson referenced Romans 14:8, saying that his peace came from knowing, "whether we live or we die, we belong to the Lord." Affirmation congratulates Brownson and his partner on this election, and the Conference on their wisdom of selection.

Affirmation Membership Meeting

There will be a meeting of the full Affirmation membership at our Birthday Gathering in San Francisco this September.

We will meet on Saturday afternoon, Sept 25, 2010. At this meeting we will approve any new Council members and proposed changes to the by-laws. A copy of these proposed changes will be available by Aug. 1 on both our website (www.umaffirm.org) and Facebook (Affirmation: United Methodist) page. The proposed changes include correcting our legal name, changing our fiscal year to match the calendar year, changes in Council terms of office and other minor updates.

The Affirmation meeting is open to all persons. However, you must be a paid member in order to vote. Membership dues are \$35 or \$10 low income.

Fun Things... (Continued from page 1)

Rose" restaurant where garlic is the focal ingredient for not only your entrée, but also the dessert. The SF Museum of Modern Art is just a few blocks away. Taxis are plentiful and not expensive, and with them the whole city is easily visited. Golden Gate Park offers the Japanese Tea Garden, the Arboretum and Botanical Garden, and just to the east is the famous Haight Ashbury neighborhood with memories of the 1960s and Hippies.

There is so much to do you might want to stay several extra days. See you there!

Seeking Archival (or Just Old) Materials

Affirmation is celebrating our 35th Birthday this Fall. We're calling for all old minutes, records, letters, brochures, buttons, shirts and any items you might have. This notice is especially directed to longtime members and former Council members. We would like to do a display of our history at the Fall Gathering. We would also like to add more items to our official archives in Drew University.

Got some stuff you'd like to get rid of and clean out that closet? Please send it to us at Affirmation, Attn: Archives, PO Box 1021, Evanston, IL 60204-1021.

Or do you still want to hold on to items, but also want to enhance our display and our archives? Then scan any papers and email them to umaffirmation_at_yahoo.com (subject line: "Archives"). Likewise, take a photo of any physical objects such as patches or buttons, and mail those photos or send a scan of the photo. Please label any photos, objects, or papers with the date and some information about what it means or what was its purpose.

Or you can bring the items to San Francisco.

Check those cabinets, closets, and files. Got some stuff you'd like to pass on to others? Now is a great time to do so.

By-Laws... (Continued from page 7)

written request to:

Affirmation
Attn: By-laws
PO Box 1021
Evanston, IL 60204

These changes will be presented, discussed and voted on at the next annual meeting of Affirmation to be held during the anniversary celebration in San Francisco Sept. 24-26, 2010.

Affirmation National Council

Laci Adams
Atlanta, GA
[REDACTED]

Walter Lockhart
Minneapolis, MN
[REDACTED]

Rev. Tim Tennant-Jayne,
Co-spokesperson
Minneapolis, MN
[REDACTED]

Lyn Ellis, Co-coordinator
Columbus, OH
[REDACTED]

Stephen Mallett, Co-coordinator
Nashville TN
[REDACTED]

*** Note:** substitute the symbol "@" for the letters "_at_" in the email addresses above.

Press Releases....

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**Two Positive Signs
For Immediate Release,
Wednesday Jan. 20, 2010
By Affirmation Co-
spokesperson Tim Tennant-
Jayne**

Affirmation is pleased and excited that Annise Parker has taken the oath of office as the mayor of Houston, TX and that Amanda Simpson is being considered for a position in the United States Commerce Department. People selected these women for these positions based on their skills, abilities and merit. Our secular society has made major progress in being able to accept these out Queer women into these jobs. We pray that someday soon The United Methodist Church will likewise learn such wisdom in selecting its ordained clergy leaders.
<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/UMCalledOut/messages/3292>

**"Don't Ask, Don't Tell"
For Immediate Release,
Thursday April 8, 2010
By Affirmation Co-
spokesperson Tim Tennant-
Jayne**

The mainstream media has had quite a number of articles and editorials lately about the United States military policy commonly referred to as Don't Ask Don't Tell, or DADT. Technically, this is supposed to mean that Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender people don't talk about their personal lives and officials won't ask about them. Yet in reality, DADT is what the military uses to prohibit LGBT persons from serving in the U. S. armed forces. Or to remove them, once officials discover a person's secret.
<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/UMCalledOut/messages/3378>

**By-Laws Changes
Proposed**

The Affirmation Council is presenting changes to Affirmation's Bylaws. These changes reflect the differences in the way the organization is organized and operating since the by-laws were last changed in October 2005.

The changes include such things as updating the organization's name to the current legal name, adding electronic means of notification to already existing means, the minimum and maximum number of Council members, the way new Council members are elected and the terms they serve and moving the date of the end of the fiscal year so it does not occur during General Conference every 4 years.

The proposed changes will be available for review on our website (as listed elsewhere in this newsletter) after July 1, 2010. If you would like a hard copy of the changes please send a

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Affirmation Press Releases Kept You Updated

Light at the End of the Tunnel

For Immediate Release, Saturday, Nov. 28, 2009

By Affirmation Co-spokesperson Tim Tennant-Jayne

'I've got good news and I've got bad news.' This stock line begins several jokes. However, voting about the lives of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer folk is certainly *not* a joke. Affirmation mourns the recent vote against marriage equality in Maine, while we celebrate the vote in Washington affirming the rights of couples entering into civil unions. People frequently refer to this as the 'everything but marriage' law.

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/UMCalledOut/messages/3269>

The Incarnation of God's Love

For Immediate Release, Monday, Dec. 21, 2009

By Affirmation Co-spokesperson Tim Tennant-Jayne

Affirmation congratulates the Rev. Mary Douglas Glasspool of Baltimore on her election as suffragan (assisting) Bishop of the Los Angeles diocese of the Episcopal Church. This is indeed a very high honor for her. It is also a position which, by all accounts, she is well qualified and gifted to fulfill. We also celebrate that the voting members of the diocese were prayerfully open to

the leading of God's compelling Spirit.

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/UMCalledOut/messages/3274>

Ugandan Bill Number 18 Is Just Wrong

For Immediate Release, Monday, Dec. 21, 2009

By Affirmation Co-spokesperson Tim Tennant-Jayne

Uganda is currently considering Bill Number 18, the Anti-Homosexuality Bill, 2009. Affirmation joins with a growing number of American Christian religious leaders, including United Methodists, in condemning this bill. <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/UMCalledOut/messages/3275>

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Affirmation: United Methodists for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer Concerns

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umaffirmation_at_yahoo.com

www.umaffirm.org

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/UMCalledOut>

